

US 78 and SR 124 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting #1

March 4, 2008

MEETING NOTES

STP-0006-00(439) Gwinnett County
P.I. NO. 0006439
GS&P Project No. 26284.00

MEETING DATE: February 12, 2008

TIME: 11:00am – 1:30pm

LOCATION: Community Room at City Hall - Snellville

PARTICIPANTS: Brett Harrell (Evermore CID)
Berry Simmons (South Gwinnett High School)
Bill Norman (Westminster Presbyterian Church)
Charles Wells (Gwinnett Co. Fire Department)
Dave Foster (Nob Hill)
Dustin Greene (Emory Eastside hospital Complex)
Dwight Harrison (Volkswagon Dealership)
Elijah Collins Jr. (New Jerusalem Church)
Jimmy Dallas (Snellville United Methodist Church)
Jimmy Norton (Snellville Downtown Development Authority)
Mark Light (M&P Shopping Centers)
Mark Brannan (Hickory Hills)
Patricia Port (Summit Chase)
Robert Meredith (Snellville First Baptist Church)
Randolph Simpson (Simpson Property)
Roy Whitehead (Snellville Public safety)
Stan Hall (Harbor Oakes)
Tom Flynn (East Snellville)

Alan Chapman (Gwinnet County)
John Ray (Gwinnet County)
Jim Brooks (City of Snellville)
Susan Thomas (Edwards Pittman)
Russ Danser (Edwards Pittman)
Neal O'Brien (GDOT)
Jill Franks (GDOT)
Chuck Hasty (GDOT)
Laura Rish (GDOT)
Russell McMurry (GDOT District 1)
Jeff Church (GS&P)
Kent Black (GS&P)
Scott Shelton (GS&P)
Rani Velpuri (GS&P)
Lisa Uhlman (GS&P)



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DISCUSSION: CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

A. Introductions

Kent Black opened the meeting and asked the meeting participants to introduce themselves. Kent then briefly reviewed the meeting agenda, the CAC notebook, and the expectations for the committee.

B. Role and Purpose

Kent Black provided a general view of the project team and the members of the team. He discussed the role of the committee as to gather and share information on critical issues, assist in development of alternatives, and support the project team.

C. Area Overview

1. Neal O'Brien (GDOT - Project Manager) stressed that the current project represents a fresh start for looking at the transportation needs at US 78 and SR 124 intersection and in Snellville in general. Neal reinforced that no decisions have been made and that the project team and CAC are starting with a clean slate and he looks forward to working with all parties.
2. Alan Chapman (Gwinnett County – Asst. Director of Transportation) provided a detailed overview of County projects in the vicinity of Snellville. He also mentioned that the County is a technical and financial partner to this project.
3. Jim Brooks (City of Snellville – Interim City Manager) welcomed the CAC to Snellville City Hall and mentioned that the City is also a technical and financial partner in this project. The City looks forward to supporting the study recommendations. Finally, Jim identified that this week is his last week of employment at the City.
4. Brett Harrell (Evermore CID – Executive Director) provided a brief update of CID-lead improvements in the area including projects along US 78. He also mentioned that the construction related to removing the reversible lanes along US 78 should commence shortly.

D. Project Area Issues

Kent Black provided an introduction to the deficiencies in the project area and proceeded to request that the CAC members identify the issues that they would like to see addressed.

1. Randolph Simpson requested that the environmentally sensitive areas be identified and considered. He stressed that impacts to these key resources should be minimized.



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2. Several CAC members mentioned that they do not prefer having an overpass in the downtown area which would result in dividing the City into two separate communities.
3. Elijah Collins Jr. said there is congestion for left turn movements on SR 124 @ Wisteria Drive during lunch and in the late afternoon(3-4pm & 5-7pm).
4. Mark Brannan mentioned the need for sidewalks and proper sidewalk connectivity. He mentioned the lack of street lighting on US 78 and Wisteria Drive. He also mentioned about vertical curve US 78 and Highpoint Road and the challenges created by the physical condition.
5. Jimmy Norton said to maintain adequate access to the downtown via US 78 and SR 124 and not to put any barrier to the downtown area of the City.
6. Dave Foster said that they wanted to see an improvement to the US 78 and SR 124 intersection but would not want to see business impacts, and that there is a need to balance the desires of residents and businesses. He suggested that having an underpass might be better than an overpass to avoid dividing the City and consequently this would not block views of the City Hall.
7. Tom Flynn mentioned to improve the entire corridor area and not just the main intersection (US 78 and SR 124) in order to reduce traffic congestion.
8. Brett Harrell mentioned that providing a median from the US 78 reversible lane project would be helpful, however adequate access to the businesses must be maintained.
9. Patricia Port mentioned that improving US 78 and SR 124 intersection will not address the congestion in the area but would transfer it to other intersections. She asked to look beyond the main study location for improvements to include the adjacent intersections and back door access in the area.
10. On Wisteria Drive, drivers are turning left from the through lane because they don't want to wait.
11. The CAC recommended updating the signal timing at US 78 & SR 124.
12. The CAC requested something be done to help businesses on the west of City Hall.



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13. Pastor Elijah mentioned the presence of heavy truck traffic at Ronald Regan and SR 124.
14. The CAC mentioned that an existing spring at the southwest corner of Oak and SR 124. The spring goes under the church property and runs to the treatment plant.
15. The CAC recommended creating a bypass for Walton travelers to reduce traffic at the US 78 & SR 124 intersection, and the bypass would help businesses.
16. The CAC mentioned Highpoint Road has a steep grade and poor visibility prior to US 78.
17. Other Members mentioned that they want to encourage development and provide access through the city.

Scott Shelton recorded the CAC member comments and proceeded to identify seven (7) major issue categories.

E. Lunch Break

(During the lunch break, Scott Shelton had each CAC member prioritize their top three (3) categories).

F. Prioritize Area Issues

Kent Black discussed the major issue categories and identified the results of the CAC member prioritization as:

- Priority #1. US 78 @ SR124 Intersection Improvements
- Priority #2. Downtown Business Preservation
- Priority #3. Traffic Operations
- Priority #4. Neighborhood Cut –Through / Regional Traffic
- Priority #5. Pedestrian Accommodations/Safety
- Priority #6. Traffic Safety / Lighting / Aesthetics
- Priority #7. Environmental / Historic Resources

G. Background Information

1. Kent described the study process for the project and referred to process diagrams provided in the participant notebook.
2. Kent informed that 32 intersections were considered for the traffic studies and 18 locations for origin destinations studies. He also mentioned that US 78, SR 124, Wisteria Drive and Oak Road were considered for collecting Travel Time data.



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3. Kent emphasized public involvement and outreach is important to this process. The residents and business community will be able to participate through the CAC meetings, public information open houses, public hearings and the project website. The GDOT is committed to obtaining local interests and input.
4. Susan Thomas briefly discussed the process of evaluating environmentally sensitive areas using NEPA process. Later, Neal O'Brien discussed about the phases and budget allocation for the project. He identified that the concept and environmental phase is funded; however no design, right of way acquisition or construction funding has been allocated to date.

H. Mission Statement

Kent Black provided some initial guidance to the CAC and then proceeded to obtain thoughts on the Mission Statement for the group. CAC members provided numerous thoughts for drafting a mission statement. The project team will prepare a draft for the CAC to review and comment.

I. Closing

1. Kent Black mentioned that next meeting will be in 2-3 months and the date and time are pending. He informed that the project website will be launched soon and website address is www.US78-SR124.com
2. Kent Black asked everyone to go through the commitment letter as part of the roles and responsibilities and requested that these be signed and returned as soon as possible.
3. Kent Black thanked the CAC for their involvement and stressed again that it is important for the success of the project that they stay involved. Kent then adjourned the meeting.

This represents our understanding of the items discussed at this meeting. If you have any questions or comments concerning any of the information contained here, please contact me.

Prepared by: Rani Velpuri

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ATTACHMENT
(Summary of Flip Charts)

Major Issue Categories:

- US 78 and SR124 Intersection Improvements
 - Addition of turn lanes for SR124 and Wisteria Drive
 - West Park place Bypass
 - Prefer Underpass than Overpass
 - Improving Henry Clower Blvd. and SR 124
- Downtown Business Preservation
 - No overpass in the downtown
 - Need balance resident and business
 - Providing median on US 78 corridor
 - Access to downtown via US 78 and SR124
- Traffic Operations
 - Improving entire corridor of US 78
 - US 78 and Highpoint Road intersection improvement
 - Signal coordination on SR 124
 - Wisteria Drive –use thru lane to make left turn
- Neighborhood Cut –Through / Regional Traffic
 - Wisteria Drive and Oak Rd cut throughs
- Pedestrian Accommodations/Safety
 - Pedestrian crossings west of SR 124
 - Sidewalks / Connectivity
- Traffic Safety / Lighting / Aesthetics
- Environmental / Historic Resources
 - Limit impacts
 - Spring location at SR124 and Oak Road

Mission Statement:

- To improve Traffic flow and safety with minimum impacts to residences and businesses in downtown Snellville
- Improve flow of traffic while maintaining integrity and Snellville's identity
- Economic catalyst by preserving existing conditions
- To make US 78 corridor safe and convenient for residents and businesses
- Balance past and future conscious of the environment



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